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# WILDFLOWERS

The Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania • October and November 2004

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## Next Meeting is October 11

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The next meeting will be Monday, October 11, **7:15 p.m.**, at **Kresge Theater**, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA (Oakland). Kresge Theater is on the top floor of the Grace Library and is accessed from the upper campus. Place a note on your dashboard saying "Botanical Society Meeting," or use your parking permit.

Our October program will feature **Dr. Mary Joy Haywood**, who will present a program on "**The Flora of Puerto Rico.**"

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## And the Next Meeting is November 8

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The next meeting will be Monday, November 8 at Kresge Theater. **Roy Kraynyk**, executive director of **Allegheny Land Trust** will speak about the organization and its conservation efforts. Allegheny Land Trust is a nonprofit organization incorporated in 1993 to protect land of natural value in and adjacent to Allegheny County. It has protected over 1,250 acres in Allegheny and Washington Counties

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## The Winner Is Blue-Eyed Mary

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Votes have been tallied for the winner for the wildflower do you think should represent the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania. President Haywood announced at September's meeting that members chose Blue-eyed Mary, *Collinsia verna*.

Blue-eyed Mary is found in moist rich soil, often along our streambanks. O. E. Jennings writes in Wild Flowers of Western Pennsylvania and the

Upper Ohio Basin that "this delicate member of the figwort family carpets many a moist, thinly wooded hillside or lowland meadow with a misty, heavenly blue."

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## Enjoy Your Wildflowers: Wild Cucumber

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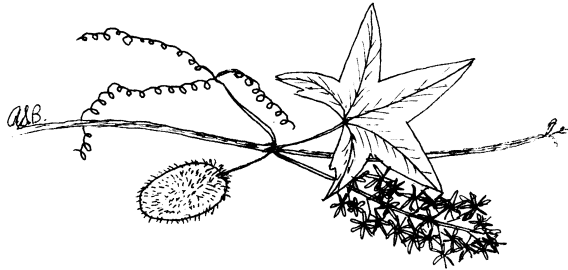
Wild Cucumber is an American vine sometimes used horticulturally. This annual, with its three-forked tendrils, climbs to twenty-five feet without harming the plants or structures on which it rests. With its greenish-white flowers from summer into mid-autumn, it is a quick, attractive, cover in rich, moist, areas, the type of habitat it prefers. It grows wild in Canada from New Brunswick west to Saskatchewan south through the States to Florida and west to Texas. It is scattered throughout Pennsylvania.

Wild Cucumber's stem is angular, grooved, nearly smooth, and branching. Each leaf axil may have a tendril, a leaf, and a stalk each of staminate (male) and of pistillate (female) flowers. A few hairs may be present. Leaves are thin and rough, up to three inches long, with three to seven lobes, a heart-shaped base, and a petiole about the length of the leaf.

The flowers are about ½" wide with six narrow petals joined at the base. Sepals are similar. The staminate have joined stamens with yellow anthers and are numerous on erect, branched, racemes. The pistillate may have a few stamens. There usually is only one pistillate producing one fruit at an axil. Both hang. Flowers are cross-fertilized by bees and wasps.

The fruit is about two inches long, less in diameter, with short, soft prickles. Green and

fleshy at first it dries as it matures, then bursts open from the top ejecting its four seeds as much as twenty feet. This apparently prompted another common name, Squirting Cucumber.



Wild Cucumber, *Echinocystis lobata*, by Anne S. Bahl

Botanically, it is *Echinocystis lobata*, Greek *echinos*, hedgehog, for the prickles, and *cystis*, originally *kystis*, hold, contain; *lobata* is from *lobos*, rounded projection, for the lobed leaves. There is only one species in this genus. The family is *Cucurbitaceae*, Latin, *Cucurbita*, gourd. It includes Melons, Pumpkins, Squashes, Loofah sponges.

Anne S. Bahl

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## Pennsylvania State Park Big Tree Program

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The Big Tree program is a record of the largest trees found in Pennsylvania's State Parks. Each species is recognized, allowing for a wide variety of big tree champions, from the 125-foot tall Red Oak at Cook Forest State Park to the 15-foot tall Witchhazel at Clear Creek State Park.

How does a tree Become a Big Tree? The process begins with a nomination by a park visitor or employee. This nomination can be based upon visual inspection of the tree and some simple measurements. Once a tree is nominated for the Big Tree program, the score must be determined by a forester.

There are three criteria for determining the score of a tree: circumference, height, and average crown spread. Points are awarded for the three criteria and added to produce a final score,

which is used to determine a tree's rank among other Pennsylvania State Park Big Trees.

When visiting a Pennsylvania State Park, keep an eye out for these giants. If you see a tree that might be eligible for the Big Tree program, write down the location and give it to the park manager to begin the nomination process.

Is there a Big Tree near you?

### Allegheny National Forest Region

Species		Park	Score
Aspen, Big Tooth	<i>Populus grandidentata</i>	Parker Dam	146.25
Maple, Red	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Parker Dam	232.5
Witchhazel	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Clear Creek	32.5
Oak, Red	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Cook Forest	365.25
Hophornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Parker Dam	99.5
Hornbeam, American	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	Parker Dam	99
Hemlock, Eastern	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Cook Forest	335.5
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus macrosperma</i>	Parker Dam	73.5

### Laurel Highlands/Southern Alleghenies

Species		Park	Score
Magnolia, Umbrella	<i>Magnolia tripetala</i>	Ohiopyle	39.81
Oak, Burr	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Canoe Creek	230.5
Sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Keystone	172.5
Serviceberry, Downy	<i>Amelanchia arborea</i>	Canoe Creek	123.25

### Pittsburgh Region Species

Species		Park	Score
Cherry, Black	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Moraine	278.25
Horsechestnut	<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Raccoon Creek	246.25
Oak, Shingle	<i>Quercus imbricaria</i>	Raccoon Creek	175.5
Spruce, Norway	<i>Picea abies</i>	Raccoon Creek	220.5

Visit the Pennsylvania State Park Big Tree program on the web at [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/natural/bigtree.aspx](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks/natural/bigtree.aspx).

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## Spirits and Nature Conference – Saturday, October 16, 2004

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The majesty of a mountain overlook, the mystery of a deserted beach, the quiet of an old growth forest, or the bright sparkle of a mountain stream...what is it that draws us back to a place, that gives us a feeling of anticipation as we approach it, a feeling of satisfaction as we take in its essence?

These topics and more will be explored at the Spirit and Nature Conference at Chatham College, Saturday, October 16, 2004, beginning at 8:00 a.m. The conference will feature a variety of provocative and inspiring discussions, experiences and speakers. The conference also features a discussion among knowledgeable panelists, from a diverse range of religious backgrounds, whose spiritual insights include a reverence for nature. At 8 p.m., renowned photographer John Beatty will present “WILD: A Dialogue of Elements” – a spellbinding and dramatic multidimensional visual experience.

The Spirit and Nature program is produced by Venture Outdoors, the Rachel Carson Institute of Chatham College and the Allegheny Group of the Sierra Club. Details can be found at [www.alleghenysc.org](http://www.alleghenysc.org). Tickets for the conference can be purchased by calling 412-255-0564.

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## Field Trip Schedule

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Registration is not required. Everyone is welcome, including non-members. For questions, call the leader or Loree at (724) 872-5232. **Note varying dates and times!**

**Sunday, October 17, 2004**

**Erie National Wildlife Refuge, Crawford  
County**

**Leader: Lee Ann Reiners (814) 398-8571;  
[reiners@surferie.net](mailto:reiners@surferie.net)**

**Time: 2:00 p.m.**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 154 Saegerstown/Conneautville/PA 198. Turn right (east) on PA Rte 198 for 2.9 miles. Turn left on US Rte 19/6 north for 8 miles to Cambridge Springs. Pick up PA Rte 408 and travel east about 5 miles to the corner of Rte 408 and Swamp Road, the trailhead for the Trolley Line Trail.

The new Trolley Line Trail was completed this summer and runs 1.75 miles along Muddy Creek.

**Saturday, October 30, 2004**

**Moraine State Park - South Shore, Butler  
County**

**Leader: Esther Allen (412) 366-0786**

**Time: 1:00 p.m.**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 North to Exit 99 - Route 422/Butler/New Castle. Drive east on Route 422 about 2 miles to the South Shore Exit. Turn left toward the park. At the park office, continue straight ahead for about 0.7 mile and turn right into the Pleasant Valley Picnic Area, where we will meet.

**Saturday, November 20, 2004**

**Plain Grove Fen, Lawrence County**

**Leaders: Marci McNutt Brissett and Luise  
Davis**

**Time: 10:00 a.m.**

**Directions:** From Pittsburgh, take I-79 north to Exit 105/PA 108/Slippery Rock. Drive west on Rte 108 (turn right) toward Harlansburg for about one mile; at the first crossroad, turn right toward Plain Grove. Travel about one mile to a church on the right and a cemetery on the left. Meet at the church.

Be prepared for wet feet with water-proof boots or a change of shoes if you wish to fully explore the area, though it will not be necessary for everyone to walk in wet areas.

## Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania – October and November 2004

279 Orr Road  
West Newton, PA 15089

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### **WILDFLOWERS - Bulletin of the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania**

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**President:** Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, (412) 578-6175, E-mail mjhaywood@carlow.edu; **Vice-President:** Phyllis Monk, (412) 831-2724 E-mail: uscmonk@ieee.org; **Treasurer:** Kimberly Metheny; **Recording Secretary:** Bonnie Isaac

WILDFLOWERS is published monthly by the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania. We welcome short articles of botanical interest, drawings, and notices of botanical events and group activities. Send to the editor at the above address. Deadline for submissions is the 23th of the previous month. WILDFLOWERS is printed on recycled paper.

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### **The Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania - Membership Information**

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The Botanical Society was founded in 1886. The object of the Society shall be to bring together those who are interested in Botany and to encourage the study of this science and a knowledge of plants. Annual dues are \$10.00 for individual and \$15.00 for family. Students can join at half-rate. To join, mail your name, your address, and check payable to "Botanical Soc. of W PA" to Loree Speedy, 279 Orr Road, West Newton, PA 15089. Your membership includes a subscription to the monthly bulletin WILDFLOWERS.

The Society meets the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:15 p.m. sharp, at Kresge Theater, Carlow College, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Oakland. All are welcome to the informative program and business meeting.

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### **Wildflowers of Pennsylvania – Ordering Information – 400 pages of text and 612 color photographs**

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Wildflowers of Pennsylvania can be purchased for \$20.00 (plus \$1.40 sales tax for PA residents). Forward your check, made payable to Botanical Society of Western PA, to Dr. Haywood at the address below. If you order by mail, add \$2 postage and handling for one book, \$3.00 for two, \$4.00 for three, \$4.50 for four. Send your request to Dr. Mary Joy Haywood, RSM, Ph.D., 3333 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3165 (412) 578-6175; mjhaywood@carlow.edu